

*Done by Ed King, June 27
This photo is
11
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city
D. King
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In Vicksburg (Warren County) Negro delegates were unable to nominate delegates from the floor to supplement the list already drawn up by party officials. However, they were allowed to participate in some aspects of the meeting and their opposition to the unpledged elector resolution received press coverage. One Negro delegate, who had elected herself because no meeting was held in her precinct, was not recognized as an official delegate, even though there was no white delegate from this precinct at the convention.

The above summary of the experience of Negroes who attempted to participate in the county and precinct meetings of the Mississippi Democratic Party unequivocally substantiates what Negroes have been saying to officials of the National Democratic Party for years:

1. Negroes are discriminated against by Mississippi's traditional Democratic Party. They are not wanted as members of this party, and are not permitted to function in the party's operation.
2. Mississippi's traditional Democratic Party is opposed to the programs and policies of the National Democratic Party and will not commit themselves to support these programs and policies. Nor will they commit themselves to support the Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates to be selected by the National Party.

The Negro voters who attended the precinct meetings felt that one aspect of the functioning of the white Democratic Party came as a surprise to them - as a result of their attendance at these meetings: They discovered that whites do not attend the precinct meetings except in token numbers and that the delegates selected are usually chosen in advance by some party official. They felt that the role of the whites in the meetings was primarily to ratify lists of names drawn up by others. They concluded that officials of Mississippi's traditional Democratic Party have been very lax in attempting to create a widely based party and in attempting to actively involve as many people in the party's machinery as possible.

The fact that in most areas Negroes were not treated so crudely at the county level can perhaps be attributed to the very different social composition of the county meetings. The county conventions are run by the top political figures in the area. Negro delegates also observed that most of the other delegates were professional men, businessmen, and the like - the so-called finest men in the community. These people did not feel threatened by the presence of a few Negro delegates, but only irritated. Consequently the whites simply ignored the Negroes.